

STEPHEN R. SHALOM

THE RWANDA GENOCIDE



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &
DISCUSSIONS
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE 'ANARCHIVE'

"Anarchy is Order!"

*'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by
another Man's.
I will not Reason & Compare: my business
is to Create'
(William Blake)*

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a 'new' kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as 'Anarchy is order', 'Property is theft',...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The 'anarchive' or 'anarchist archive' Anarchy is Order (in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the '**principles, propositions and discussions**' of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the 'new anarchism' outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.

Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing texts from the CD (collecting all available texts at a given moment) that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts to friends and new ones to us,... Become your own anarchivists!!!

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and authors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchivists offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*“...demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to
squash us like horseflies;
and the will-‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance.”*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be sent to A.O@advalvas.be.

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

WELCOME!!

THE RWANDA GENOCIDE

BY STEPHEN R. SHALOM

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For 100 horrendous days in 1994, genocide took place in the small African country of Rwanda. The term “genocide” has been used with varying degrees of precision, but even under the most demanding definition there is no doubt that the events in Rwanda between April and July 1994 qualified as genocide.

Members of the Tutsi ethnic group, who made up about 14 percent of Rwanda's eight million people, were targeted for extermination. The victims were all unarmed civilians. Neither age nor gender nor infirmity were protection against the killers. Those who sought refuge in churches, hospitals, or schools were butchered just the same. The killers were not content to merely expel the Tutsis from Rwanda; Tutsis had been allowed to leave in 1959, the genocide's ideologues declared, but the same mistake would not be made again. The number of Tutsi dead may never be known, but serious estimates place the toll at between half a million and a million. Gerard Prunier, in his valuable *The Rwanda Crisis: History of A*

Genocide (Columbia University Press), puts Tutsi deaths at 800,000.

The killers were all from Rwanda's majority Hutu ethnic group, but the extremists who orchestrated the massacres went after Hutus as well, eliminating politicians, human rights activists, journalists, and any other moderate Hutu thought to stand in the way of the genocidal project. Prunier estimates that some 10-30,000 moderate Hutus were slaughtered.

The killers and their victims were all Rwandans. The genocide, however, cannot be understood without grasping the crucial role played by outsiders.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

In pre-colonial Rwanda, the categories "Tutsi" and "Hutu" were somewhere between castes and ethnic groups. The boundaries between the two groups were permeable, with movement permitted between them. Some members of each group were local chiefs and there was no systematic Tutsi-Hutu violence. The brief period of German colonial rule brought European racial theories to Rwanda: the more European-featured Tutsis were deemed to be the natural-born local rulers and the Hutus destined to serve them. These theories were put into practice by the Belgians who took over from the Germans after the World War I. They replaced existing Hutu chiefs with Tutsis and issued identity cards indicating each person's ethnic group, thus eliminating some of the social mobility of the old system.

The Rwandan state was always highly centralized -- a function of the country's extremely dense population -- but became even more centralized under Belgian rule,

and life for the average Rwandan became even more oppressive. Forced labor was made more onerous, taxes were increased, and beatings became standard. A UN mission in 1948 found that of 250 peasants interviewed, 247 had been beaten.

In the 1950s, elite Tutsis began agitating for independence, and the Belgians began to shift their support to the Hutu elite, who would likely be easier to control since they lacked the experience of domination. Communist governments at the UN championed the cause of Rwandan independence, further straining relations between Belgians and Tutsis. In 1959, ethnic clashes broke out, and the Belgians allowed Hutus to burn down Tutsi houses without intervening. Two weeks later, there were 300 dead and most of those arrested by the Belgians were Tutsi.

Starting in 1960, the Belgians replaced most Tutsi chiefs with Hutus, who proceeded to organize persecution of Tutsis. The UN tried to promote some form of reconciliation, but the Belgians, to forestall any further UN interference, arranged in 1961 for the Hutu elite to engineer a legal coup and declare its independence. The Hutu elite claimed they represented democratic majority rule, but they were establishing a racist state, seeking to maintain their control over the impoverished Hutu population by portraying the Tutsis as a well-off, alien minority, just as European elites had earlier used anti-Semitism. The UN Trusteeship Commission reported with much accuracy that an “oppressive system has been replaced by another one.”

Anti-Tutsi violence continued, driving many Tutsi into exile, some of whom organized raids back into Rwanda. After a major exile raid was repulsed in December 1963, some 10,000 Tutsis were slaughtered over the next two months. By the end of 1964, there were 336,000 Tutsi

refugees. Some integrated themselves into neighboring societies, but others hoped to return to Rwanda. In Rwanda, ethnic quotas were established to limit Tutsi participation in schools, the civil service, and other government employment, and refugees were denied any right of return.

Neighboring Burundi shared Rwanda's colonial background and ethnic make-up. However, the Tutsi elite there, seeing where "democratization" had led in Rwanda, had ruthlessly held on to power by controlling the army. In 1972, after a failed uprising by some Hutus, the Tutsi leaders responded by massacring any educated Hutus. Four months later, conservative estimates put the death toll at 80,000-100,000 in a nation of 3.5 million. Among themselves, U.S. officials characterized what was going on at the time in Burundi as "selective genocide," but Washington issued no public criticism, made no private remonstrance, and did not use its leverage over the Burundian economy to force an end to the killing.

In Rwanda, the Hutu ruler tried to use the Burundian massacres as an excuse for anti-Tutsi actions, hoping that the popular mobilization might bolster his faltering regime. A few dozen Tutsi were killed, propelling more into exile, but the Hutu elite split and in July 1973 Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana (a Hutu) took over in a bloodless coup.

THE HABYARIMANA REGIME

Under Habyarimana discrimination against Tutsis continued, but as long as they didn't get involved in politics they were generally left in peace, and there were

no ethnic massacres between 1973-90. Habyarimana, however, was a dictator and he established one party rule. His National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) was, in Prunier's words, "a truly totalitarian party"; administrative control under Habyarimana "was probably the tightest in the world among non-communist countries." This did not make his regime unpopular with foreign aid donors, who appreciated the tight ship he ran. That every Rwandan citizen had to participate in collective labor on Saturdays may have been harsh, but, in the eyes of donor countries, effective.

Habyarimana's Rwanda saw improvement in per capita income, but in the mid to late 1980s the prices of coffee and tin collapsed. The precipitous drop in coffee prices was not just the result of random market fluctuations, but of a decision by the U.S. government under political pressure from large coffee trading companies. Rwandan export earnings declined 50 percent between 1987 and 1991 and famine spread throughout the Rwandan countryside.

The Rwandan elite had had three main sources of enrichment: coffee, tin, and skimming off foreign aid. With the first two no longer available, foreign aid became more critical than ever, thus increasing the incentive for Habyarimana's inner circle to resist any sort of democratization.

In June 1990, French President Francois Mitterrand called for multi-party systems in Africa (a position from which he was soon to retreat). Back in 1975, Paris had signed a military cooperation and training agreement with Kigali, and France had gradually replaced Belgium as the dominant power in Rwanda. A month after Mitterrand's comments, Habyarimana declared that he agreed with the French position. Despite his insincerity,

the country's democratic opposition -- Hutu and Tutsi -- pressed for a multi-party system and democratic reforms. In September 1990, the International Monetary Fund imposed a structural adjustment program on Rwanda, freezing government salaries and devaluing the Rwandan franc. The imposed devaluation added to the country's other economic problems, contributing to inflation and the collapse of real earnings.

In October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, an organization of primarily Tutsi refugees from Uganda, invaded the country to obtain the right to return to Rwanda and to overthrow the dictatorial Habyarimana regime. Many of the RPF soldiers were veterans of civil war in Uganda, where they had fought for a non-ethnically based regime, some rising to high positions in the Ugandan military. In 1987, the Tutsi refugees formed the RPF with the intention of establishing a non-ethnic state in Rwanda. A few Hutu Rwandans joined the RPF, but it remained largely a Tutsi organization; it had a progressive ideology, though some of its members were Tutsi supremacists.

Prunier suggests that the Ugandan president likely knew the general outline of the RPF invasion plan and didn't try to stop it, but certainly wasn't behind it. The Ugandan leader assumed Habyarimana also knew about the invasion, the threat of which would make him more willing to negotiate on the refugee question. In fact, argues Prunier, Habyarimana knew about the coming invasion and was determined to use it to crush his internal opposition.

Belgium and France sent troops to Rwanda to evacuate their nationals from the country. Belgium withdrew its forces promptly and cut off military aid in a situation of civil war. French troops, however, stayed on. To Paris, Africa was the one place where the glory of the French

empire could still live on. “Without Africa,” Mitterrand had written in 1957, “France will have no history in the 21st century.” Prime Minister Edouard Balladur explained that “France sees itself as a world power. This is its ambition and its honor.” And its “main field of action is Africa,” especially French-speaking Africa. But it was not just a matter of honor. Corrupt African rulers helped finance French political parties, aided with money laundering, provided sweetheart deals to well-connected French companies, and voted with Paris at the UN. And Mitterrand's son was then head of the Africa Office at the Elysée and personally close to the Habyarimana family.

Habyarimana arrested almost 10,000 of his political opponents, while some 350 Tutsi civilians were massacred in the countryside, the killers acting under the authority of local officials. In early 1991, further massacres were carried out. The Rwandan army grew ten-fold from October 1990 to mid-1992, and France provided all the weapons, either directly or by secretly arranging foreign arms contracts from Egypt or South Africa. The Rwandan government gave a French military officer overall command of counter-insurgency operations, and the French staffed roadblocks, fired artillery, and served as advisers to Rwandan field commanders.

Other governments made representations in Kigali to protect particular individuals in danger or to protest major abuses, but only Belgium and Germany really distanced themselves from the Habyarimana regime. The European Christian Democratic Party declared in 1992 that “there is no alternative to the MRND.” In the same year, U.S. officials publicly stated “Our relations with Rwanda are excellent...and there is no evidence of any systematic human rights abuses by the military or any

other element of the government” -- despite the fact that human rights groups were reporting that the failure to bring a single human rights abuser to justice indicated that violators were acting at the direction or under the protection of the most powerful political figures in Rwanda. Washington had provided Kigali with a significant amount of economic aid before 1990 and a small amount of military assistance. This continued during the civil war.

Habyarimana's repression, however, did not intimidate the democratic opposition. In January 1992, 50,000 people marched in a pro-democracy demonstration in Kigali. Some members of Habyarimana's inner circle favored violence on a massive scale to crush the opposition, but for the moment Habyarimana agreed to form a coalition cabinet. Members of the opposition parties took over a number of cabinet positions, including that of prime minister. Habyarimana, however, was by no means conceding defeat. His party remained the largest in the government, controlling the Defense and Interior portfolios among others. Death squads were set up within the military. MRND civil servants countermanded instructions from opposition ministers. In March 1992, the Habyarimana clique employed a new tactic, foreshadowing the genocide to come: the *interahamwe*, the MRND's “youth group” -- but actually a militia organization, trained, armed, and indoctrinated in racial hatred by the regime -- was used to massacre Tutsi civilians. That same month a new political party formed, the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR) even more committed to Hutu extremism than Habyarimana. It had its own militia which was backed by the Presidential Guard and other elements of the army. France, as part of its military aid to the Rwandan

government, also provided training to both militia groups -- possibly without realizing it.

In June 1992 the opposition parties took the brave step of meeting with the RPF and the RPF announced that its armed struggle was over. In July a cease-fire was signed and negotiations began in Arusha, Tanzania, to set up a transitional government that would include the RPF. Habyarimana, however, blocked progress every step of the way, sometimes publicly disavowing the government negotiators at Arusha and other times organizing additional massacres.

In January 1993, an international human rights commission visited Rwanda. Its report documented abuses on all sides, but found that most of the 2,000 civilians killed were Tutsis whose murders were approved at the highest levels of the Rwandan government, including Habyarimana. As soon as the commission left the country, another 300 people were killed, and the MRND announced that it rejected the power-sharing agreement just worked out at Arusha.

The RPF responded on February 8 by breaking the cease-fire. Militarily it fared much better than before, but it declared a unilateral cease-fire on February 20, fearing possible French intervention, but probably more concerned about alienating moderate Hutus and the Hutu population generally, many of whom fled the advancing RPF troops.

France accused the RPF of unprovoked aggression -- not mentioning Habyarimana's sabotaging of the Arusha talks, nor its own violation of an Arusha agreement that all foreign troops leave the country -- and sent in additional soldiers and at least 15 transport planes full of arms. On February 28, the French Minister for Cooperation called upon the opposition to make common cause with Habyarimana against the RPF, an alliance

that could only be ethnically-based. The opposition rejected the proposal, but Habyarimana was able to split the opposition parties, finding some elements in each party willing to join him in an extremist Hutu front.

The signs of the approaching crisis were plain to see. The existence of death squads in Rwanda had been exposed in October 1992. The arming of the militias was regularly denounced by human rights groups. A top ideologue of the MRND was known to have given a speech in November 1992 calling for genocide. In August 1993 a UN investigator warned of the threat of ethnic killings in Rwanda. That same month, an agreement was signed at Arusha spelling out the terms of transition, but the extremists blocked its implementation. In September, members of Habyarimana's inner circle set up a new radio station, RTLM -- a particularly potent medium in a country 60 percent illiterate -- and used it to denounce the peace agreement and whip up ethnic hatred. In October 1993 the Hutu president of Burundi, freely elected a few months earlier, was killed in an attempted coup by extremist Tutsi army officers. Unlike 1972, the international community didn't ignore the crisis, with Washington and others suspending aid, and the coup was defeated. But Hutu extremists encouraged massacres of Tutsi peasants in the countryside and the army responded by slaughtering Hutus. All told perhaps 50,000 were killed -- somewhat more Tutsis than Hutus - - and 300,000 Hutus fled across the border into Rwanda, adding to the latter's ethnic tensions.

The signatories to the August Arusha agreement asked the UN to provide a neutral military force to monitor compliance. The RPF was especially eager to have the UN replace the unabashedly pro-Habyarimana French troops. In October 1993, the Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda,

UNAMIR. Under strong U.S. pressure to minimize UNAMIR's size and to "seek economies," the Council deployed 2,500 Blue Helmets to Kigali. Meanwhile the French announced their withdrawal but secretly kept behind some 40-70 soldiers.

Habyarimana continued to stall on any actual transfer of power. He was aided in this regard, perhaps inadvertently, by the U.S. ambassador and the Secretary General's special representative. Both dismissed evidence presented by the RPF of the planning going on for genocide, and both endorsed the demand by the ultra-extremist CDR for a seat in the new National Assembly. Since the CDR was openly calling for the extermination of Tutsis and denouncing the Arusha accords, urging its inclusion could only undermine the peace process and infuriated both the RPF and the democratic Hutu opposition.

Over the next few months, UNAMIR reported and protested the continued arming and training of militias, the secret importation of weapons by the government, and incendiary broadcasts on RTLM. The Belgian foreign minister described the situation as "five minutes to midnight" and warned that under its mandate UNAMIR (which included Belgian troops) could not stop the distribution of arms to civilians. No change was made in UNAMIR's mandate.

GENOCIDE

As assassinations and mob violence spread through Kigali, intense international pressure was brought to bear on Habyarimana to accept the transitional arrangements. On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana was returning to Kigali

in his presidential plane (a gift from Mitterrand), when the aircraft was shot down killing all on board. No conclusive proof is yet available as to who fired the missile, but it is almost certain that the perpetrators were Hutu extremists from Habyarimana's own inner circle. Within an hour of the plane's downing the Presidential Guard set up roadblocks throughout Kigali and proceeded to liquidate moderate Hutus whose names were on prepared lists. Among their early victims were the Hutu prime minister and ten Belgian peacekeepers. Then the militias went after every Tutsi they could find. At this point the RPF announced that it was breaking the cease-fire in order to put an end to the killings. Some later claimed that the massacres were a response to the renewed civil war, but this reverses cause and effect. The militias were under central control at all times, and almost the entire civil service participated in the slaughter, which is what made it so efficient. This was not a case of a "failed state," then, where chaos broke out as state structures collapsed. On the contrary, it was the authoritarian state structure that carried out the killings. With the president and the prime minister dead, the extremists announced the formation of an "interim government" consisting entirely of those committed to genocide. They hoped to convince the world that what was going on was just random inter-ethnic violence, rather than premeditated genocide. In this they were aided by many in the West who disseminated misinformation, even though there was compelling early evidence regarding the actual nature of the killings. Ignorant journalists referred to Hutus and Tutsis "slaughter[ing] each other" and asserted that the "Hutu government does not appear to have any real control over the militiamen." Worse yet, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali characterized the situation more

than three weeks into the genocide as one of “Hutus killing Tutsis and Tutsis killing Hutus.” The next day, President Clinton called on the Rwandan army and the RPF to agree to an immediate cease-fire and declared that it was “time for the leaders of Rwanda to recognize their common bond of humanity and to reject the senseless and criminal violence that continues to plague their country” -- a particularly innocuous, and misleading, formulation.

One reason that events in Rwanda were characterized as inter-ethnic killing was because this view fit nicely with Western stereotypes of savage Africans. (This was, in former New York City mayor Ed Koch's words, “tribal warfare involving those without the veneer of Western civilization.”) But another reason was that U.S. officials shared with the interim government an interest in denying that genocide was taking place. As long as what was going on in Rwanda was just some mutual and chaotic killing, there was not much that Washington could be expected to do. Thus, two months after the genocide began, the Clinton administration was still instructing its officials to refrain from using the term “genocide.” Not until June 15 did Clinton agree to use the term, but only because a virtually unanimous Senate Foreign Relations Committee was about to send him a letter demanding that he do so.

The real priority for the international community was evacuating its nationals from Rwanda. French paratroopers landed on April 9 and Belgians the next day. Belgium asked the UN to modify UNAMIR's mandate to allow international soldiers to stop the slaughter, but Paris rejected the idea. As part of its operation, France evacuated Habyarimana's family and -- pretending they were orphanage employees -- some MRND leaders. Belgian and French troops withdrew,

leaving behind African partners of mixed-race couples and the French embassy's Tutsi personnel. In Washington, Senator Robert Dole declared: "I don't think we have any national interest here. I hope we don't get involved there." The "Americans are out. As far as I'm concerned in Rwanda, that ought to be the end of it." Unable to change UNAMIR's mandate, and facing public revulsion at the killing of ten of their peacekeepers, Belgium urged the Security Council to withdraw the Blue Helmets. Washington strongly urged the total withdrawal of UNAMIR, but, finding much resistance from the Council's non-permanent members, relented and agreed to reduce the force to a token presence of 270 troops. It's hard to know what an empowered UNAMIR might have accomplished, but surely the reduction in the international presence sent a powerful message to the killers that they could murder with impunity.

U.S. officials claimed that it was the UN, not the U.S., that should have done more to muster a force to prevent Rwanda's violence. But the UN cannot act independently of its most powerful members. Even when Washington does not use its veto, its economic and military strength ensure that it will be, in Phyllis Bennis's words, "calling the shots" at the UN.

The Clinton administration had earlier determined that Washington would sharply limit its support for peacekeeping operations. Clinton told the UN in September 1993 that the organization had to learn "when to say no," and to ask "hard questions" before dispatching any further peacekeeping forces. In March 1994, this new policy was formalized in Presidential Decision Directive 25. The specific tough questions that had to be answered included, in essence, being able to predict how the operations would develop, which effectively barred virtually all peacekeeping.

Some have argued that Clinton was here responding to public opinion, particularly after the debacle in Somalia. However, in April 1995 four out of five Americans believed the UN had a responsibility to intervene in conflicts marked by genocide. Despite the obfuscation by U.S. officials as to what was going on in Rwanda, a poll taken in June and July 1994, during the genocide, found that 61 percent would have favored U.S. participation in a “large” UN force to “occupy” Rwanda and “forcibly stop the killing.”

Unlike the public, the mass media were urging that Rwanda be ignored. The New York Times editorialized that “the world has little choice but to stand aside and hope for the best” (April 23), Clinton “has rightly resisted” the call to expand UNAMIR (May 18), and deserves credit for his “prudence” (July 30). The New Republic in an editorial entitled “Why Not Rwanda?” acknowledged that genocide was going on, and that the catastrophe dwarfed that going on in Bosnia, but nevertheless considered it appropriate to do nothing more than provide humanitarian relief in Rwanda because Rwanda's “chaos may trigger a parallel disaster in its sister republic of Burundi, but nowhere else,” while neutrality in the Balkans might encourage chaos in “strategically vital parts of the world.”

More recently, Michael Lind wrote in the same journal that Washington ought to leave the UN because it is dominated by countries that “singled out South African apartheid” while ignoring the Rwandan genocide. The U.S.-led effort to reduce UNAMIR was denounced by many African countries and the Organization of African Unity. Third World nations wanted to increase, not reduce, the strength of UNAMIR.

Two weeks after the Council ordered the reduction in UNAMIR, the Secretary General -- responding to public

outrage and the insistence of some small countries -- put Rwanda back on the agenda. The Council agreed to authorize a new force, UNAMIR II, 5,500 strong, for dispatch to Rwanda under an expanded mandate. However, as Human Rights Watch explained, "last minute hesitations" by Washington "resulted in orders to deploy in the first instance only a small force of several hundred troops and about 150 unarmed observers." The deployment of the rest of the force was to depend upon "progress towards a new cease-fire between the RPF and the government, the availability of resources, and further review and action" by the Council.

Some commentators have complained that no African country sent new or additional troops to Rwanda once the killing began. But these are poor countries, lacking proper equipment and the means of transporting their troops to Rwanda. On May 25, Ethiopia offered 800 troops, fully equipped and trained, but needing transportation. None was found until mid-August. Nigeria, Senegal, and Zimbabwe offered troops as well, but needed equipment. Ghana was prepared to dispatch troops as soon as they could be equipped with armored personnel carriers. Washington offered to provide these, but not for free, and the price tag would include the cost of getting them to Africa. "As the death toll mounted in Rwanda," reported the New York Times, the U.S. and the UN "negotiated for weeks." Not until mid-June did Washington agree to speed up the delivery. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake later boasted that "We have done what we said" and the Ghanaian battalion was "about half deployed now." Unfortunately, these comments were made when the genocide was already over.

PURSUIING A CEASE-FIRE

As African Rights argues in its powerful report, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance (2nd edition), if UNAMIR II were used in pursuit of the same goals as were sought by U.S. and UN diplomatic efforts, the results would likely have been counter-productive as diplomatic efforts were thoroughly misguided.

In situations like Rwanda, where the bulk of the deaths are due not to military conflict, but to genocide being carried out behind the lines of one of the combatants, then a cease-fire would permit the killing to continue unimpeded. If the international community wasn't going to stop the genocide, then it had an obligation to let the RPF -- the one force that could stop it -- do so. Nevertheless, the thrust of international diplomacy was precisely to try to promote a cease-fire between those committing genocide and those committed to stopping it. The RPF stated that it was willing to accept a cease-fire only if the massacres stopped. It even went along with a 96-hour cease-fire to test the international insistence that that was the way to end the genocide. The killing continued.

Significantly, one of the strongest cease-fire advocates was the genocidal regime. It wanted UNAMIR to be reinforced so that it could impose a cease-fire. This, more than anything else, should have given pause to those who called for a cease-fire. Nevertheless, on May 7 Clinton called on the Rwandan army and the RPF to agree to an immediate cease-fire, adding that it was "time for the leaders in Rwanda to reject the criminal violence that continues to plague their country," but his statement attributed neither blame for the "criminal

violence” nor made its end the precondition for the cease-fire.

By the end of May, the Secretary General finally understood what was at issue: “It would be senseless to attempt to establish a cease-fire and to allow deliberate killings of civilians in the Rwandan government forces zone to continue.” Therefore, “a halt to the killings of civilians must be concomitant with a cease-fire.” A U.S. government statement issued the same day, however, continued the muddled policy.

A UN representative stated on April 29, 1994 that “we must not be seen to be taking sides.” But as African Rights pointed out, diplomatic neutrality “was not appropriate for Rwanda.” Neutrality makes sense when there is right on both sides, not when one side is committing genocide. In mid-May, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on all parties to the conflict in Rwanda. This was inappropriate. Instead, the embargo should have been imposed on the interim government alone. This does not mean that the RPF was above criticism, only that it was the sole force capable of promptly stopping the genocide. The international community should have tried to facilitate its victory, not stall it.

African Rights argues that in its “obsession with the despatch of troops, the international community, and specifically the U.S. and UN, were overlooking other courses of action” that “could have been far more effective.” Here are some things that could have been tried, but were not.

First, given the dependence of Rwanda on outside aid, the international community could have made clear to the killers that no assistance would be forthcoming to a regime based on genocide. Washington resisted making such a declaration.

Second, the international community could have announced that no diplomatic recognition would be extended to a genocidal regime. Washington never made such a statement, but continued its diplomatic relations with the interim government until the RPF took Kigali. Only then did Clinton self-righteously declare that the U.S. “cannot allow representatives of a regime that supports genocidal massacre to remain on our soil.” Even worse was the behavior of France and Egypt which officially received and lent respectability to representatives of the interim government.

Third, the interim government could have been isolated by expelling its representative from the UN Security Council, where it ironically was permitted to retain its seat throughout the genocide. Moreover, it was allowed to participate in debate and votes on Rwanda, while the RPF was denied the opportunity to present its views.

Fourth, the leaders of the genocide were known. The international community could have identified them by name, warning them that they would be held personally accountable at war crimes trials. Washington did sometimes name the culprits and call upon them to stop the killings, but the statements did not condemn the named individuals, nor threaten them with consequences. Fifth, France had special leverage with the interim government, being the regime's main foreign supporter. The only time Paris used its clout, it was able to stop militia members from killing people at a hotel in Kigali. As African Rights observed, this raises the prospect that “more vigorous French action could have stopped the genocide.”

But if Paris was in a good position to stop the genocide, so too was Washington, by pressuring France. Had Clinton made a special appeal to Mitterrand to get the killers to stop, perhaps even threatening not to participate

in the upcoming commemorations of the joint victory over fascism as long as France was allowing the new genocide to take place, this might have forced Paris to act.

France's complicity goes deeper than failing to take steps to stop the slaughter. While the genocide was going on, French arms were being delivered to the killers. Some of these deliveries came after the Security Council imposed its arms embargo on Rwanda. The arms shipments may not have been authorized by the president's office, but despite Paris's denials, there can be little doubt that they took place. Moreover, it is quite possible that Washington knew about the secret French arms deliveries. On May 3, shortly before the arms embargo was imposed, the Voice of America reported that U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright stated that the Clinton administration had reason to believe that someone was supplying weapons, "but she refused to name that country."

None of these alternative strategies for dealing with the genocide was pursued. Instead, embarrassed by the interminable delays in deploying UNAMIR II, the Security Council accepted an offer of a "humanitarian" military intervention from an unlikely source: France. On June 21, 1994, Paris offered to send troops to save lives until UNAMIR could arrive, but insisted that the intervention be under French command and that they not be part of UNAMIR (thus following the U.S. unilateralism in Somalia the year before). Washington and the Secretary General endorsed the idea, but there was considerable skepticism, both inside and outside the Council.

The RPF was the most vociferous opponent of the French intervention, and this opposition led Brazil to abstain on the vote in the Security Council. New

Zealand, which also abstained, sharply refuted the claim that there was no alternative to French intervention: If France were to “redirect” the resources of its intervention to transporting and equipping UNAMIR, the latter's delays would “disappear overnight.”

Hesitancy by some Council members did get the enabling resolution revised to stress that the operation would be “impartial and neutral” and would “not constitute an inter-position force between the parties.” Even then it only received ten affirmative votes, the minimum necessary. Of the ten, one came from France, and another from the interim government of Rwanda. The latter's representative called the French initiative “timely and commendable” and urged a cease-fire.”

OPERATION TURQUOISE

There were a number of motives for the French intervention, called “Operation Turquoise.” This was an election year in France and politicians were competing for the high moral ground; additionally, France was receiving bad press from its complicity in the genocide, and the intervention might salvage its reputation. But there were more sinister motives as well. Jacques Baumel, vice president of the defense committee in the French National Assembly, declared that the RPF is “threatening the privileged position of France.” To many French officials, the fact that the RPF had come from Uganda, where English was spoken, made it part of an “Anglo-Saxon conspiracy.” Operation Turquoise, Baumel went on, has shown that France has the means to undertake “a rapid and effective intervention. Friendly countries on the black continent, and with whom we

have sometimes signed treaties of military assistance can be reassured: we have just proved that we are still capable of acting in Africa. Fast and well.” French troops gave Paris the ability to control events, perhaps even save the interim government.

The French government -- at Prunier's suggestion -- met in Paris with the RPF for the first time in the entire conflict to try to allay the latter's fears. The RPF modified its position, saying it would not oppose a purely humanitarian mission, but remained deeply suspicious. French troops were welcomed by the interim government and its army, militias, and radio; interahamwe units produced a sign proclaiming “Welcome French Hutus.” Rwanda's southwestern corner, where the French forces arrived, was still under the control of the interim government. As the troops spread out into the country, their intentions remained unclear. One official declared that the RPF could not be allowed to achieve a military victory; an army captain spoke of drawing “a line in the sand”; the French defense minister declined to say how far the troops would advance or whether they would move into RPF areas; and a military spokesperson would not confirm whether French soldiers would fight the rebels in the event of a confrontation.

As it turned out, France declared the establishment of a “safe humanitarian zone” in the southwest (without waiting for UN authorization), but pulled its troops back from the northwest and the key city of Butare. The RPF agreed to halt its advance toward the zone, provided that the French disarmed all militias and military personnel there. It is possible that France's hesitations regarding the aims of Operation Turquoise were resolved by the feelings of its own troops. “This is not what we were led to believe,” a noncommissioned officer said upon

finding Tutsi corpses. "We were told the Tutsis were killing Hutu, and now this."

African Rights estimates that Operation Turquoise might have saved 12-15,000 Tutsis; Prunier reckons the number at 13-14,000 at most. Such numbers, of course, are nothing to sneeze at, no matter how small they seem compared to the 800,000 killed. As noted, however, France could have used its resources to equip and transport UNAMIR contingents, to save the same lives.

France allowed the organizers of the genocide to enter its safe zone and escape into Zaire without being arrested by French troops. By the time the French left, not one killer was in custody. Survivors claim they had identified major war criminals to the French forces to no avail, even though some of these criminals had been threatening people after the French arrival. Ethiopian forces who took over from the French found that some leading killers had been allowed to escape from custody and saw French vehicles being used to transport Rwandan army personnel to safety in Zaire. A BBC reporter met the former Rwandan chief of staff traveling in a French military jeep inside Zaire in late July 1994.

The organizers of the genocide wanted to escape into neighboring Zaire, but they wanted to bring with them as many Rwanda's Hutus as possible, no matter how much suffering such a large scale population displacement might entail. A mass exodus would deny the RPF a functioning society, provide a vast sea of refugees within which the killers could hide, and allow the killers the opportunity to rebuild a military force to overthrow the victorious RPF-led regime.

To promote this mass exodus, some people were driven out by force and some followed the orders of their local officials, as they had been doing for years. But, as a UN study later concluded, the displacement of the population

might have been contained had it not been for “deliberately inflammatory broadcasts from radio stations controlled by the ‘interim Government’.” As the RPF advanced, RTLM relocated to the French safe zone and broadcast incendiary propaganda until mid-July with no French effort to find and destroy the transmitter. (From the beginning of the genocide human rights groups had unsuccessfully called on the UN to destroy the RTLM transmitter.)

According to investigations by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, France continued to provide military training for the ex-Rwandan army in the Central African Republic, and France and Zaire, flouting the arms embargo, continued to provide weapons to the leaders of the former Rwandan regime in Zaire.

THE EXODUS

The architects of the genocide were successful in panicking some two million Hutus to flee Rwanda, creating a major humanitarian crisis, for there was inadequate food, water, or sanitary facilities to sustain such a massive influx of people. Cholera broke out in the refugee camps and the international community responded with a gigantic relief effort, bringing the death rate in the refugee camps to close to normal.

TV cameras transmitted the horror of the cholera epidemic on the Zairian border into the world's living rooms; the genocide in Rwanda, however, had been untelevised and thus had much less of an impact. This led to an inaccurate public understanding of the situation, abetted by those interested in promoting confusion.

When Mitterrand was asked about the genocide, he replied: "The genocide or the genocides?" This was the double genocide gambit, the claim that there had been two genocides, one victimizing Tutsis and the other Hutus. The numbers, however, were vastly disproportionate: 800,000 Tutsis massacred and 50,000 Hutu cholera deaths. But more significant is the fact that the former were intentional deaths, the latter were not. If anyone is to be held responsible for the cholera deaths it is the interim government officials who engineered the exodus, not the Tutsi-led RPF. As Alain Destexhe, the former head of the relief agency Doctors Without Borders, wrote in his critique of the Rwanda crisis, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York University Press), during the slaughter of the Tutsis the word "genocide" rarely appeared in media headlines; but 'genocide' and 'Holocaust' were frequently and quite inaccurately applied, even by the most widely respected journalists, in reference to the subsequent cholera epidemic." Clinton said Rwanda could be "the world's worst humanitarian crisis in a generation," but he referred to the refugee situation, not the genocide.

The refugee camps were under the control of the very people who organized the (one and only) genocide. They acquired added leverage over the camp population through control of relief supplies. Thus, humanitarian aid had the perverse consequence of strengthening the authority of those who had been responsible for the genocide. The aid had two other negative consequences: making the living conditions in the refugee camps better than in surrounding Zaire or back home in Rwanda, thus discouraging refugees from returning home; and providing the killers with relief supplies that could be diverted and resold in order to help finance their rearming.

Doctors Without Borders closed down its program in the refugee camps so as not to be used by the killers, but for most charitable organizations the refugees in Zaire provided them with their biggest fundraising opportunity in years, and they weren't about to give it up so easily. Many of these organizations, being totally ignorant of the situation, did no screening when hiring local personnel, so numerous people implicated in the killings were on their payrolls. These individuals helped spread the extremists' message that those returning to Rwanda would be killed by the Tutsis.

In the meantime, the victorious RPF had set up a government of national reconciliation in Rwanda. The prime minister was the Hutu chosen to be transitional prime minister as part of the 1993 Arusha accords, the president was one of the RPF's Hutu members, and most of the cabinet were Hutus. The vice-president and defense minister was Paul Kagame, the leader of the RPF's military arm, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). Despite this formal structure, however, the RPA, with the only arms, vehicles, and communications equipment in the country, was the dominant component of the new government.

The new government was faced with staggering conditions. Eight hundred thousand were dead. Among the living were untold numbers suffering from serious wounds and profound trauma. Children had been orphaned, spouses widowed, women raped. In some areas just about every Tutsi house had been demolished. Many who had participated in the killings were still around. There was no police force. There was no court system. Yet trials of the perpetrators of the massacres were essential, both to break the culture of impunity which had flourished for so long in Rwanda, and to answer the victims' cry for justice, without which there

was the grave danger of private retribution. The RPA needed to remain mobilized, given the continuing threat on the borders from the troops of the former regime, yet the new government lacked even the funds to pay its soldiers.

If ever there were a government in need of massive international assistance, both financial and technical, this was it. Yet, as a top official at the U.S. Agency for International Development remarked in September 1994, he had never witnessed a situation in which the international community had essentially marginalized a government to the extent it had in Rwanda. While millions of dollars poured into the refugee camps dominated by the killers, hardly any money went to the Rwandan government. The new prime minister was baffled: "We appreciate what is happening to help the dying in the camps. But beyond that, what? Must we get cholera to be helped?"

International donors told the Rwandan government that aid was contingent on its making conditions within the country secure for the return of the refugees. But security required precisely the aid that was being withheld. Numerous human rights reports had found no evidence of genocide or systematic atrocities on the part of the RPF. The RPF had maintained fairly good discipline and had generally restrained revenge killings on the part of its members. But as the destitution of the Rwandan government continued, the situation worsened. Unpaid soldiers began to hire themselves out to settle private vendettas. Tutsi supremacists began to gain in strength.

African Rights argues that the UN's Human Rights Field Operation viewed its mission not as helping to deal with the aftermath of the genocide by bringing the perpetrators to justice, but as single-mindedly seeking out human rights violations by the RPF. Some of the

human rights monitors bitterly complained to African Rights that they were being told that their job was “nailing the RPA.” They had no problem, they said, with exposing and criticizing RPA violations, but they resented the fact that this had become their exclusive task. And Rwandan survivors of the genocide resented this even more.

The Security Council set up a war crimes tribunal to deal with the Rwandan genocide, but it was much delayed and under-funded. The enabling resolution -- as Lawyers Without Borders and the Rwandan government noted -- was worded so as to exclude from the scope of the tribunal's consideration various crimes: among them, crimes committed before January 1, 1994 (for example, the drawing up of lists of victims in 1993); crimes committed outside of Rwanda by non-Rwandans (for example, French citizens who delivered arms to Zaire, for shipment to the interim government in Rwanda); and crimes committed by states, effectively letting France and Zaire off the hook.

The international tribunal issued its first indictments in December 1995, but the whereabouts of the eight indictees was unknown. The Security Council “urged” -- but did not require -- states to arrest and detain potential war criminals; few are likely to actually stand trial.

In July 1995, only 15 percent of the international aid pledged to Rwanda had been disbursed. The next month a coalition of 33 human rights and humanitarian groups sent a letter to the White House: “Governments and international organizations have promised much since last year's genocide,” it recalled. “Now is the time for them to deliver.” The letter went on to warn that “the Hutu extremist perpetrators are rearming in exile, Tutsi extremists are gaining ground within Rwanda, and the international community has failed to provide the

resources to rebuild the country and strengthen the moderates.”

Disbursements have since increased (they stood at 69 percent of pledges in January 1996; the U.S. accounted for 10 percent of the pledges). But the total pledges were far from adequate, and they came too late to prevent seriously deteriorating conditions: some Hutu ministers have resigned from the government as ethnic tensions have increased; relations between the government and both aid agencies and UNAMIR have become strained, with potentially grave consequences; and vast numbers of refugees remain on the border, while the perpetrators of the genocide continue preparations for a military comeback. Meanwhile, the situation in neighboring Burundi is a powder keg that the international community has only begun to address.

Rwanda has experienced, in the words of Boutros-Ghali, “what would have been a nightmare had it not actually come to pass.” And other nations bear a deep responsibility for that nightmare. On July 26, 1994, after the genocide was over, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose told a Senate committee: “Through the UN, the United States has taken a leading role in efforts to protect the Rwandan people. We strongly supported the UN arms embargo and the expansion of UNAMIR, with a revised mandate to help protect threatened populations and relief efforts.” No mention was made of the U.S. refusal to expose those who were providing arms to the killers, of the U.S.-led effort to reduce UNAMIR, of the U.S.-inspired delays in deploying UNAMIR II, of the U.S. insistence on a cease-fire, of the U.S. refusal to call genocide “genocide,” to pressure Paris, or to isolate the genocidal regime. France is the foreign country bearing primary culpability for

Rwanda's nightmare, but there is little in the record of the United States of which to be proud.

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